

The First 7 Minutes: Empowering Communities Around the World Through Knowledge



Eli Jaffe* and Abigail Klein

MDA Deputy Director General- Community, Magen David Adom, Israel

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*Corresponding author: Eli Jaffe, MDA Deputy Director General- Community, Magen David Adom, Israel

Abstract

In recent months, the world has seen an uptick in mass casualty incidents (MCI). Most recently, on 27 April 2019 a shooting left 1 dead in Poway, California, on Easter over 300 people were murdered in wide spread bombings around Sri Lanka, on 15 March 2019, a gunman opened fire on a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, and on 27 October 2018 another gunman shot and killed 11 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. These are just a few out of many mass casualty incidents which have occurred in recent months. In each incident, at each of the scenes, were bystanders who wanted to help those in need. Not all of them had the knowledge to do so, leading to a feeling of helplessness. This feeling is not unique, and this is not a new issue, and can be debilitating for a community attempting to recover from such tragedy.

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Opinion

As such, Magen David Adom in Israel (MDA), Israel's National Emergency Medical and Blood Services Organization has developed a unique training seminar to provide community members and security teams with skills, knowledge and a feeling of being able to handle whatever may come their way, empowering them through these difficult situations. Empowerment, dealing with the situation and bleeding control have been found to be the most crucial skills at the scene of an MCI which often occurs with little to no warning, thus leaving the community in a state of shock. Following the 2012 shooting in Sandy Hook, the Hartford Consensus was written based on the findings of a committee established to assess and create protocols with the aim of improving patient outcomes in MCI situations. The Hartford Consensus sets guidelines for controlling external bleeding with the implied understanding that internal bleeding can only be treated in a hospital.

Magen David Adom developed the seminar based on the understanding that stopping external bleeding and rapid evacuation of those with internal bleeding saves lives, while taking into account the needs of international communities and Magen David Adom's vast experience in MCI treatment and management.

These basic principles have been found to save lives as evidenced in research which surveyed long-term patient outcomes following traumatic injuries in which the bleeding was controlled almost immediately. One study done in Trinidad and

Tobago found that patients who received proper haemorrhage control in the field had a 96% instance of favourable outcome compared with the 12% outcome of those who did not.

MDA Deputy Director General of Community, Volunteers, PR, Training and International Relations Dr. Eli Jaffe explains: "One of the worst feelings is when people are put in a situation in which they do not know what to do – people become frustrated if they are not equipped to help," explained Dr. Jaffe. "We teach them that there is something they can do and it's quite simple. It takes just four hours to teach the seven principles of saving lives to an entire community that will prepare them to quickly and effectively respond to mass casualty incidents," he said. "We teach the community to alter its mindset from concentrating on one injured individual to care for the masses, while cooperating with and following the instructions of medical professionals."

The seminar, called "The First 7 Minutes" is a half day seminar and practical training session designed to share the Israeli experience, knowledge and skills needed for the community to be empowered to act during such incidents, as a result saving lives and assisting emergency responders at mass casualty incidents.

The seminar is based on seven principles which provide community members with concrete steps to help make sense of the chaos that is an MCI. In just 4 hours, participants are given the tools and empowerment to then save lives should the need arise. Originally developed by MDA in Israel, the seminar has

been offered in many different languages in 15 countries around the world and has seen 2,000 participants with more locations scheduled for 2019.

MDA has returned to some of the communities and found that the seminar has left its mark on the communities. On occasion MDA is requested to teach a follow up seminar to security personnel in communities where the training has already been offered for the community members. In addition to training community members and security teams, MDA has taken its knowledge and expertise of mass casualty incidents to Tor Vergatta University in Rome, Italy. As part of the cooperation

between the two bodies, MDA has trained medical students at Tor Vergatta in MCI response protocol as EMS (emergency medical services) providers, as physicians, incident management and how to treat and triage patients with minimal equipment in an effort to save as many lives as possible over the course of 3 days. Eli Jaffe praised the program saying, "By helping around the world to prepare as many people as possible – both civilians and professionals – we are fulfilling our own mission as a humanitarian organization," maintained Jaffe. "The First Seven Minutes' seminar is an innovative way to fulfil our mission of saving as many lives as possible, as efficiently as possible. And for that, we are certainly proud."



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